

**A FEMINIST READING ON THE TESTIMONIES OF TAMIL TIGRESS IN
SELECTED LITERATURE**

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Abstract

Ethnic based disparities and exclusivities in the political and economic policies of Sri Lanka has caused to a protracted civil war in the country between the Government and the rebel group called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE). The war came to end in 2009 making a military victory over the LTTE. Since that, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL), donor agencies and civil society organizations have focused on policy making and implementation on peace building, reconciliation and reconstruction (Thiranagama, 2011; Salter, 2015; Stokke and Uyangoda, 2012). The discourse of the post-war peacebuilding in Sri Lanka has not focused only on the role of the Government and non- government agencies in peacebuilding, but also on narratives and experiences of the combat lives of the ex- LTTE cadres. The perceptions and stories of the LTTE ex- combatants have been revealed in the literature on human rights, peace building and freedom movements. This paper is to examine how the women's role has been constructed in the selected two sources; Thamilini Jayakumaran's *,Thiunu Aspitakatak SewenaYata* (2016), Niromi de Soyza's *, Tamil Tigress: My Story as a child soldier in Sri Lanka's bloody civil war* (2011). The objective of the research is to understand the perception of the female ex- combatants on emancipation, liberation and freedom through the lens of militarized liberation movement. In addition, the paper will identify the channels of reconstructing masculinity in the movement for the freedom of suppressed group. The power of socialization agencies over individual choices will be scrutinized. Research problem is that, even though, the LTTE was to achieve the emancipation of the suppressed group by a revolution, why the female combatants have subjected to gender based discriminations within the movement? Two research questions are to discuss; how the women have been placed on the LTTE movement? How the female combatants have pursued their liberation by the movement? Secondary data has been collected in the research. Two selected novels were used to develop the argument. And the secondary data of the research has been analysed through narrative analysis methodology. According to Niromi's narrative, she has engaged with the LTTE as a child soldier. Her book reflects the thoughts of the enlisted women in the movement in the late 1980s to establish a violent free land for Tamils. Her ultimate belief was that, the land free from violence would provide equity, justice and liberty for women. Sivakamy alias Col Thamilini has joined the LTTE to protect the Tamil people from the violence made by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Army. Thamilini and Niromi have kept a trust in the LTTE, a military organization on securing the rights of Tamil community. However, Niromi has understood the LTTE as an organization on patriarchal values and promoted masculinity. Thamilini has not noticed the dominance of patriarchal values over women in the movement, but her writing mentions that she understood membership in the movement as a massive mistake due to the rigid and centralized leadership. The story of Thamilini reflects her



personal regret of joining the movement rather not identified the movement as an instrument to reproduce patriarchal values, masculinity, and violence. Peace defines in the contemporary literature on war as a feminine occurrence. The literature of war, social movements and the confessions of freedom fighters have predominantly interpreted women as victims in the war than freedom fighters. Thamilini's testimony is one of the examples that locate women as just victims rather than the agents of changing system. Niromi was able to build up women as a capable group to change system. The political project of liberation and emancipation of women through movement, however has failed because of the patriarchal hegemony in the movement.

Key words: Female Ex- combatants, Feminism, Patriarchy, Women's rights

Introduction

Now that I put my gun down
For almost obvious reasons
The enemy still there invisible
My barrel has no definite target
Now
Let my hands work
My mouth sing
My pencil write
About the same things my bullet aimed at

Freedom Nyamubaya, 2009

The civil war between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) came to end in 2009. Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Executive President at the time, addressing the Sri Lankan Parliament declared the military victory over the LTTE and mentioned the ability to restore democracy in the country hereafter (Athas, 2009). In the speeches of the politicians in the Southern Sri Lanka defined the war against the LTTE as a humanitarian operation to liberate the whole country and the Tamil people (Sengupta, 2009). Rebel Official Slevayasa Pathmanathan said in a statement emailed to Associated Press that "this battle has reached its bitter end. It is our people who are dying now from bombs, shells, illness and hunger. We cannot permit any more harm to befall them. We remain with one last choice to remove the last weak excuse of the enemy for killing our people. We have decided to silence our guns" (The Guardian, 2009). The common and highlighted words in those politicians and rebellions speeches are 'Tamil people (our people)' and 'liberation'. The root causes of the LTTE movement was to liberate Tamil community and to ensure security, welfare and representation though a territorial division in Sri Lanka (Stokke, 2006). The intention of government warfare against the LTTE was to liberate the Tamil community and assimilate the



LTTE control areas into the central government. The concept of liberation war of the government and the LTTE, however, led to crushed and deprived the liberty, rights and space of the Tamil people (Marcelline, 2014; Soyza, 2012).

This paper is to read the testimonies of the female ex- combatants in the LTTE movement through a feminist lens. The central argument of the paper is that, war in Sri Lanka is not an action of Tamil community but a reaction to injustice, inequality and deprivation of rights by the government policies. Anyway, the LTTE was one of the means to display the reactions of the Tamil community to the government policy. The LTTE has later became the ‘sole’ representative of and the channel to emancipate the Tamil community. The paper scrutinizes how the LTTE as a mean of emancipating turned into an instrument of male politics to suppress the Tamil women in the North. Besides, the paper tries to identify the women’s role not as a victim and a sympathizer in the war but as a warrior and an agent of peace. The paper, thereby, challenges the stereotyped political ideology of war as a man’s task and peace as a woman’s task.

The paper is divided into four sections. Introduction to the paper is in section one. Section two is the literature review of the research. The literature review focuses on the origin and evolution of the LTTE, women’s role in the LTTE movement and a brief description of the books of Tamil Tigress and *Thiunu Asipathaka Sewana Yata* (Under the shadow of sharp sword). In addition, the literature review will bring out the feminist readings on war and peace. The discussion of research problem and answers to the research questions are in the section three. The methodology of the secondary data analysis will also be described in the section three . Besides, the research problem and the questions will be realized through the writings of the narratives of Niromi de Soysa and Thamilini in the section. Section four contains the conclusion of the research.

Following literature review section explains briefly the root causes of organizing the LTTE and the nature and scope of expanding the LTTE movement.

2. Literature Review

The literature review is divided into the following sub- sections; Firrst sub section is to understand the origin and expansion of the LTTE movement. Subsection two provides an insightful understanding on the usage of masculine power in the LTTE over its female



members. The feminist reading on the LTTE movement and war and peace in Sri Lanka is in the subsection three. A brief presentation of the books of Tamil Tigress (Nirome de Soysa) and *Thiunu Asipathaka Sewana Yata* (Tamilini) is in sub-section four

2.1. Origin and expansion of the LTTE movement

“The noise of exploding grenades and gunfire was deafening. There was a lot of screaming. More and more jeeps and tanks arrived on the road, bringing reinforcement. A helicopter gunships hovered low above us, strafing. I crawled forward on my elbows, still holding my AK in position, my forefinger stroking the trigger....” (Soysa, 2012, p.4)

The Tamil youth organized violence against the government of Sri Lanka to make a separate state in the North and East for the Tamils. Anti- government movement in the Tamil community was a reaction to the state- sponsored riots and violence against the Tamil (Manor, 1984). “The state- sponsored, anti- Tamil riots of July 1983 in Colombo and other cities started a new flow of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees to the West. The basis of the LTTE’s international organization was built in these exiled communities..... the LTTE developed into a formidable military organization capable of challenging the Sri Lankan army using conventional battles, guerrilla attacks and terrorism” (Philipson, 2011, p.107).Nadarajah and Sriskandarajh mention the recognition given to the LTTE by its leader, Prabhakaran, “the LTTE says it is spearheading an armed struggle for political independence for the Tamils as a response to institutionalized racism and violence against the Tamil people by a Sinhala- dominated state. It is waging a national liberation struggle. Its liberation movement deeply embedded in the people articulating the wishes and aspirations of the Tamil nation” (Nadarajah and Sriskandarajah,2005,p. 88). Nadrajah and Sriskandarajah further argue that the armed struggle for independence launched by the LTTE and other Tamil armed groups in the late 1970s escalated in 1983 following the widespread anti- Tamil riots in the capital city of Colombo and other parts of the island in July that year (Nadarajah and Sriskandarajh, 2005).

In accordance to the bulk of literature of Sri Lanka civil war, the LTTE was a reaction to the actions of the Sinhala- Majoritarian government of Sri Lanka (Marcelline, 2014; Soysa, 2012; Palihakkara, 2017; Wickramasinghe, 2015; Bandarage, 2008). The speeches and press conferences and media interviews of the LTTE leaders have highlighted that, the LTTE movement was to establish a free, fair and liberal state for the Tamil community who been



marginalized, isolated and ignored by the Sinhalese dominant government (Satp, 2007; Salter, 2015). The reactions of the LTTE to the government policies were developed into the military and violence. The political discourse of the LTTE to solve the national question through a peaceful mean has been vanished. The sole strategy of the LTTE hereafter has developed to the military, including suicide bomb attacks. The peace negotiation and ceasefire agreement of the GOSL with the LTTE has failed due to the pressure of ethno- nationalists in the government and in the LTTE movement (Goodhand and Korf, 2011). The process of peace building was defined as a 'peace trap'. The GOSL and the LTTE have shifted from 'peace through negotiation' to 'peace through war'. The peace project of the country thereby has become 'war for peace'. Goodhand and Korf mention that "[at the time], the Rajapaksa government essentially redefined the 'ethnic question' as an internal security problem with the LTTE becoming the overarching threat and enemy to the Sri Lankan polity and society" (Goodhand and Korf, 2011, p.2). The literature points out that the LTTE was no longer considered as a political agent and a representative of the Tamil community but a terrorist group fighting against territorial sovereignty and the unitary mechanism of the country (Goodhand and Korf, 2011).

Despite the government definition on the LTTE as a terrorist group, it was the sole representative of the Tamil community. The concept of 'sole' representation and the military and financial capacity of the LTTE has established the movement as the only and most powerful liberation group in the Tamil community (Soyza, 2012; Thiranagama, 2011; Smith, 2011). The following section is to resolve the question of 'why the Tamils join the terrorist or liberation movement?'

2.2. Why the Tamils join the Terrorist Movement?

“ Thileepan : “Yes tell me why you want to join our (LTTE) movement?”. Thileepan’s gentle tone and demeanor reminded me that he had in fact been a second- year medical student when he gave it all up to join the movement. I told him, like him, I had had enough of the treatment the Tamils were receiving at the hands of the government (Soysa,2011, p. 69).

Niromi de Soysa conveyed the message that at the very beginning of the LTTE movement, children were not enlisted to the LTTE movement. However, Niromi and her friend, Ajanthi were able to join the movement stressing the uncertainty and injustice made by the government



against the Tamils in the country. Niromi's testimony justifies the LTTE as a just and fair reactions to the actions of the Sinhalese dominated government in the South. The Tamil community has developed a faith in the LTTE's. It is clear with the statement of the Niromi regarding the LTTE role in providing security in the period of the Government Certificate Ordinary Level exam in 1986. "When the Tigers offered protection for our final exams, Sister Joseph, our principal, was grateful. We sat for the exams while trying to ignore the young Tiger men who patrolled the examination hall, armed with automatic rifles" (Soyza, 2011, p.47). Jaffna town was being bombed and become unsecured in 1987. The situation was explained in the story of Niromi as "Ajanthi (the best of Niromi lived in Jaffna) and her family were staying, as so was my father's family. They were still hopeful that the Tigers would protect the city as they had promised" (Soyza, 2011, p.65). The question is that why people kept the faith in the Tigers than the Government of Sri Lanka on the matter of securing Tamils' lives and cities. The question was answered in the narrative of Niromi. "The Sinhala government was dropping bombs on its own citizens-it was hard for me not to sympathies with fellow Tamils and be stirred by the injustice they were facing" (Soyza, 2011, p.43). Niromi's testimony reflects her and the Tamil community's disappointment and frustration on the government politics and found the LTTE as the way to fulfill the security, welfare and liberation of the Tamil community - the basic needs of the human lives. It was the cause of many young groups to join the LTTE. However, later on, the LTTE way to address the cause was questioned by the LTTE members and the Tamil community (Soyza, 2011).

"I heard the terrible gun fire on the other day. Indian Peacekeeping army made an operation in Paranthan. We hide ourselves under the desks in the classroom. The Indian army came to our school. They took the principle out of his office and hit him in public. I was so upset and cried louder when I saw the bleeding and swollen face of the principle. It was a terrible journey to go to school at that time. We lived in the pressure of Indian Peacekeeping army and the Sri Lankan army. I had a mind to establish just and fair society for the Tamil people who living in a pain and disappointment and frustration. I found joining the LTTE as the only solution to solve these issues and recover these people" (Jeyakumaran, 2016, p. 67).

According to Thamilini Jeyakumaran, the young Tamils enlisted to the LTTE to liberate the Tamil community and to have a free-fair and a secured regular life in the North and East. The failure of fulfilling the basic needs and ensuring the secured lives for the Tamils pushed the



young Tamils to have a separate state through a military victory over the government of Sri Lanka. Thamilini wanted to be a university graduate. However, the war killed her dreams and pulled her to take the arms and fight for freedom of the Tamil land (Jeyakumaran, 2016). The stories of Niromi and Thamilini have recognized ‘war’ as a turning point in the Tamils’ lives in the North and East. The following story of Yamuna claims that how war the impacts in the Tamil women’s decision making capacity.

Yamuna Sangarasivam asked Kala, a 23-year old women cadre shares her testimony of joining the LTTE movement.

“When we see our sisters, and mothers raped by the [Sri Lankan] army, when we see our brothers taken away, beaten, and killed, when we watch our homes burn up in flames in the aftermath of aerial bombardments, what are we to do? Where do we go to hide, to live? I decided that I was not going to let that happen to me. I was not going to be raped and killed in the hands of the [Sri Lankan] army. I saw the courage of other girls who were joining the movement and decided that this was really the only way to survive” (Alexander, 2014).

The stories of female ex-combatants emphasize their rationality in making the choice of joining the LTTE. (Soyza, 2011; Jeyakumaran, 2016). The stories of the former- LTTE carders proclaim that their armed struggle for a separate state is to have good governance and to protect the freedom, wellbeing, identity and security of the Tamil community. The following figure one depicts the two circles that one represents the controlled area of the Government of Sri Lanka where that the Tamil community did not pertain freedom, wellbeing, identity and security. The inner circle signifies the Tamil Elam where people can enjoy their freedom, identity, wellbeing and security. Tamil Elam would set up within the government of Sri Lanka but segregated from the government controlled land by the armed movement of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam.

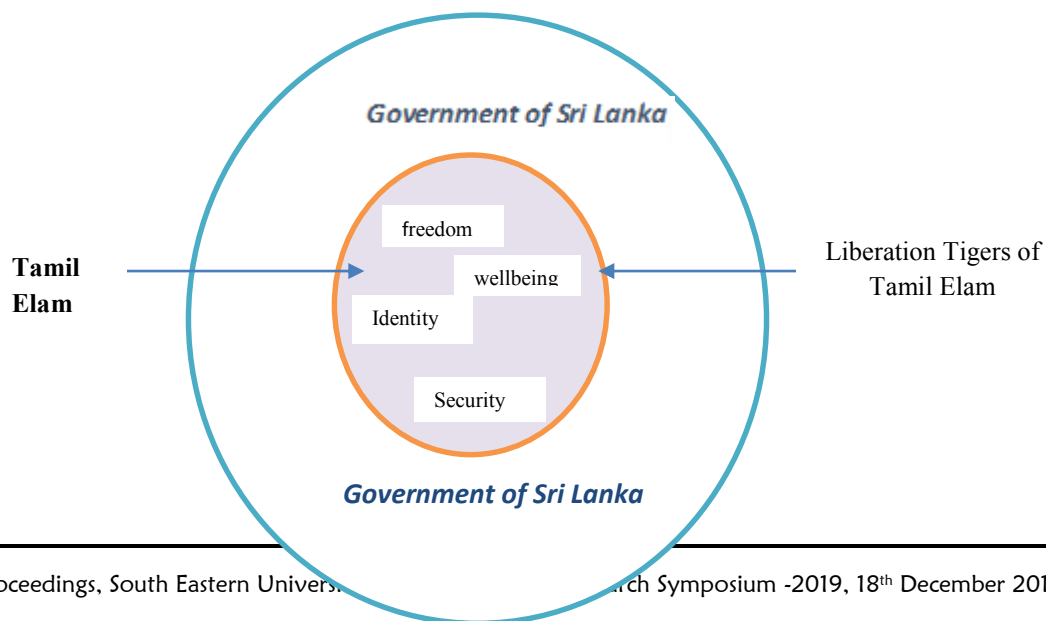




Figure 1: Tamil Elam and the Government of Sri Lanka (Writer developed the figure)

Literat... depended on the matters of security and wellbeing of the Tamil community. However, the voluntary recruitment turned into a popular campaign, targeting the young generation in North and East. Popular politics was used by the LTTE to enlist the young generation promoting the slogan of die for the nation rather than experiencing political awakening (Thiranagama, 2011). The report of the Amnesty International 1996 points out that “by 1991, harsh pass laws imposed controls on those aged ten to twenty- five (which varied somewhat between areas but was generally 10-23 for girls and 10-25 for boys)” (Amnesty International, 1996, p.8). Thiranagama points out that the LTTE policy of forceful recruitment that “one could leave the peninsula if one left another child. Vasantha’s (a girl in Jaffna) parents were told that her parents and sister could leave Jaffna if they left Vasantha behind for the LTTE or found an equivalent child as a guarantor” (Thiranagam , 2011, p. 57).

The LTTE’s forced recruitments appeared from the end of 1990s. The researcher argues that, the forced recruitment of the LTTE signifies the failure of using popular politics for the movement to remain in the power. The LTTE developed as the ‘only hope’ in the Tamil community subjecting it to popular politics. The trend of popular politics has emerged in the movement in the line of ‘sole representative’ of the Tamil community at the national and international level. The popular politics of the movement has persuaded the LTTE to become the ‘strongest’ and the ‘most’ rigid rebel group in the world. The popular politics, thereafter, has uprooted the LTTE in the Tamil community and planted in the international community. The literature of the LTTE further supports to this argument (Nadarajah and Sriskandarajah, 2008; Korf, Spencer and Jonathan, 2011). The LTTE disconnectivity to the grassroots has caused to increase the undemocratic activities of the movement such as forced recruitment of children.

“My parents refused to give me to the LTTE so about fifteen of them came to my house- it was both men and women, in uniform, with rifles, and guns in holsters.... I was fast asleep when they came to get me at one in the morning...These people dragged me out of the house. My father shouted at them, saying, ‘what is going on? But some of the LTTE soldiers took my



father away towards the woods and beat him... They also pushed my mother onto the ground when she tried to stop them” (girl recruited by the LTTE in 2003 at the age sixteen) (Becker, 2004, p.2). Jo Becker’s report of *Living in Fear: Child Soldiers and the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka* in 2004, declared the undemocratic, unpopular and uncivilized forced recruitments of the LTTE in the North and East. Becker further mentions in the report that “Tamil children are vulnerable to recruitment beginning at the age of eleven or twelve. The LTTE routinely visits Tamil houses to inform parents that the much provide a child for the ‘movement’. Families that resist are harassed and threatened” (Becker, 2004, p.2).

The LTTE behavior on the cases of child soldier, forced recruitments and tax policy made the Tamil community vulnerable than empower it. The binary –opposite of the LTTE policies led the movement ‘unpopular’ and ‘undemocratic’ and a ‘military strategy’ than a ‘political strategy’. It can argue that, the LTTE changed the political archetype from ‘self- determination’ to a ‘separate state’ focused on the international financial and political aids. The separate state in the LTTE agenda would be reflected the same-old governing structure. For example, the LTTE has become a ‘racist’ movement as the GOSL on the case of Muslim eviction in the North. Thereby, the argument is that, the LTTE would be conducted the racist, ethnic centric and gender biased governance with certain minor changes. The following discussion is to understand how the LTTE movement deconstructed and reconstructed ‘gender’ within the movement.

2.3. LTTE as a way to emancipate or enslave the Tamil women?

The section 2.2 pointed out the LTTE emerged as a reaction to the government policies of discrimination and ethnic marginalization and also how the LTTE made the Tamil community empowered and vulnerable at the same time. This section is to examine the LTTE as a way to emancipate or enslave the Tamil women. How to secure female virginity from the Indian or Sri Lanka army male personals avoiding sexual harassments, eliminate poverty and economic dependability, not to be subjected to domestic and public violence and earn dignified life are the common issues in the North and East Tamil women’s everyday life which presumed to be resolved by the LTTE (Soysa, 2011; Jeyakumaran, 2016; Thiranagam , 2011). Although women joined the movement in order to have a ‘liberated society’ and ‘free and fair life’ for everyone, the LTTE opened for women due to shortage of manpower (Ponnambalam, 1983). The LTTE policy of women recruitments, thereby, can define as an ‘instrument of male



command over women'. Has the instrument of male command over women changed thereafter?

In 1983, the LTTE established the Women's front of Liberation Tigers. It was under the male leadership but by 1989, the unit had its own leadership structure (Fox, 2004). Initially the women was 'secondary labour army' performing supporting roles in the movement. "The girls were members of the Freedom Birds, the Tigers Women's political wing, which operated under Thileepan's leadership...." (Soysa, 2011, p.75). The political irony of Thileepan's leadership on the Freedom Birds that, a man decided for women in the movement which standard to make the independent and self-determination of a community. The supporting role of Freedom Birds changed after 1985, females were increasingly being used in active combat and provided with extensive training in mining, explosives, weapons technology, electronics and intelligence work (Ann, 1993; Bouta, 2005). "...female soldiers comprise approximately one-third of the fighting forces and are inducted in all units of the movement including its naval force (the Sea Tigers), and its suicide squad; an elite force known as the Black tigers. While involved in an array of military activities, girls and women are deliberately chosen for suicide bomb missions because they may not undergo as close a body search at checkpoints as males" (Jordan and Denov, 2007, p.46). Adele emphasizes that "through the development of their own forces, LTTE women fighters have subsequently earned international recognition as the most fierce, extremely disciplined and courageous women combatants in the world" (Adele, 1989, p.9). The gradually increased number of women in the movement has caused to promote women from secondary or reserve army to primary and main army (Ann, 1993; Bouta, 2005). Although, the women in the movement have been promoted to the position of primary or main active agents in the war, the question of equal representation of women in the movement would be never abolished (Jordan and Denov, 2007; Alison, 2004). Jordan and Denov argue that "while there appears to be some capacity for women in the LTTE to engage in non-traditional gender roles, representing a drastic change in behavior expected of Tamil women, nonetheless, the quite paradoxically, the LTTE movement appears to simultaneously uphold and reinforce prevalent patterns of gender constructions through the reproduction of conventional cultural standards, preventing women from attaining meaningful levels of empowerment" (Jordan and Denov, 2007, p. 44). Alison argues that, while female combatants may be involved in the ideological struggle to pursue gendered 'liberatory' goals, in practice they may in fact internalize



traditional gender role constructions rather than attempt to revolutionize existing military roles (Alison, 2004).

The cited literature in the paper reflect the point that the women's adaptation to the men's stereotyped roles in society has been misinterpreted as "emancipation and empowerment". This argument is further reinforced by the writings of Ann Adele, wife of Anton Balasingham, political advisor to the LTTE.

"The emergence of the Liberation Tigers on the Tamil national political scene has provided Tamil women with opportunities and horizons that would never have entered the minds of Tamil women a decade ago. The very decision by young women to join the armed struggle- in most cases without the consent of parents- represents a vast departure of behavior for Tamil women. Normally, young women remain under the control of their father and brother...the decision to break-out of this cycle of suffocating (male) control is a refreshing expression and articulation of their new aspirations and independence " (Adele, 1993, pp.17-18). As Adele indicates, the women in the Tamil community have become independent individuals breaking the circle of male power on them in the family though, I argue that, these women again in the movement, the place full of male manipulation. The evidentiary support to my argument is that, these female combatants had no strong and independent political sight on liberation but they relied on his leader's view. It is very much visible in the following two narratives which selected to read feminist aspect on the LTTE movement in Sri Lanka. The literature review of the study leads to formulate the following research problem and questions.

3. Statement of Research Problem, questions and Methodology

The fundamental argument of structured the LTTE movement was to liberate the Tamil community from widespread discrimination at the hands of the Sinhala majority claiming armed resistance to the oppression of the Sri Lankan government on the Tamils (Whittaker, 2001). A high- profile political and military group motivated by radical nationalist and separatist ideals, the LTTE has fought relentlessly for almost 30 years for the establishment of an independent and sovereign Tamil Elam in northern and eastern Sri Lanka (Voorde, 2005, p.185). LTTE is a movement altered its dimension from reaction to revolutionary. As a reactive and revolutionary organization, how the LTTE place the women in the movement? This problem can elaborate further that, even though, the LTTE was to achieve the emancipation of



suppressed group by a revolution, why the female combatants have subjected to gender based discriminations within the movement?

Two research questions are to discuss.

1. How the women have been placed in the LTTE movement?
2. How the female combatants have pursued their liberation by the movement?

3.1.Methodology

The research has collected the secondary data through a library survey. The stories of Thamilini Jayakumaran's *Thiunu Aspatakatak SewenaYata* (2016), Niromi de Soyza's *Tamil Tigress: My Story as a child soldier in Sri Lanka's bloody civil war* (2011) have been analyzed in the research. Thamilini was born in a poor peasant family in Paranthan, and she was the elder in the family. Once her father died, the family was taken care by the fathers' relatives. She studied in the Tamil medium. As she expressed in the book, her motives to join the movement were to create violence free society for Tamils and have a peaceful and prosperous life (Jayakumaran, 2016). Her decision to be in the movement was a reaction to the violated behavior of the Indian Peace Keeping Forces (IPKF) and the Sri Lanka Army Forces. She was a witness of the attack on headmaster at the school by the IPKF. And she shivered with the experiences of seeing her uncle attacked by the Sri Lanka Air-Force. Her determination emerged to save her 'Tamil Nation' and find them of liberalized, violence free environment. She joined the Birds of Freedom and her capacity bought her up to the female political leader of the movement. She revealed the wiliness of political reading and writing which reflects her thought that, liberated and free Tamil Elam could be achieved only through the LTTE movement. Moreover, the leader of the LTTE, V. Prabhakaran was the sole figure who had power, capacity and integrity to realize the objective of Tamil Elam.

Niromi de Soyza's *Tamil Tigress: My Story as a child soldier in Sri Lanka's bloody civil war* (2011) is the second narration that has been considered in the research. Niromi was born in the Middle- Class, Upper – Caste, Christian Family. Her mother was from the Central highlands and Niromi spent her childhood at the village full of Sinhalese. She migrated to Jaffna, and stayed with her Appamma (Father's mother), and studied at the Convent in English Medium. Compare to Thamilini's story, Niromi had abundance of food, cushy life but constrained childhood. The constraints on her childhood came through her social background. For example,



her mother's Indian Tamil originality was challenged by the caste system in Jaffna. However, Niromi was not victim of the caste hierarchy. Niromi's father was a migrated Engineer in Dubai. She was blessed with luxury food like, cheese, cake and all type of celebration in her life. Her fluency in the three languages was an advantage for managing her life in Jaffna town. As she mentioned in her story, she lived in a well- reputed urban area surrendered by the renowned families in the city. Same as Tamilini, Niromi was the elder of the family but she had a sister only. Niromi experienced the violence made by the Government army forces and IPKF. The violence in the regular life was not a cause for Niromi to join the movement. Her narration reveals that, she joined the movement as an outcome of popular political trend among the youth at the time. She did not have strong idea of saving the Tamil Nation, but build up a secured milieu for them. It was not very clear in her narration that, whether she had seen the movement as a path to liberalize the Tamil community. According to her story, she critically analyzed the decisions made by the movement and suspected the capability of movement as an agent of change in the Tamil society.

The research methodology of narrative analysis has been utilized to construct the argument. Bryman mentions that “narrative analysis is an approach to the elicitation and analysis of data that is sensitive to the sense of temporal sequence that people, as providers of accounts (often in the form of stories) about themselves or events by which they are affected, detect in their lives and surrounding episodes and inject into their accounts. With narrative analysis, the focus of attention shifts from ‘what actually happened?’ to ‘how do people make sense of what happened? and how do people make sense of what happened and to what effect? because stories are nearly always told with a purpose in mind- there is an intended effect’” (Bryman,2016, p. 589). Through out the research, the question raised in that, how Tamilini and Niromi do make sense of what happened and how do they make sense off what happened and to what effect? Basically, the research looks through their stories to understand, how women react to the civil war and what they benefited/ or what effect they have received from their reaction to the war?

3.2.Key research findings and the argument of the paper

Key argument of the paper is that locating women as a second sex in the liberation movement, stereotyping women as victims more than changers, political dependency on the masculine leadership.



“The tigers don’t believe that women can fight alongside the men because it will be liking placing a spark of the fire next to cotton wool”(Soyza,2012, p.51)

“The hands that wore bangles now carry weapons” (Soyza, 2012, p. 61).

“The girls were members of the Freedom Birds, the Tiger women’s political wing, which operated under Thileepan’s leadership....” (Soyza, 2012, p. 75).

These citations are to construct the argument of locating women as a second sex in the liberation movement. The first citation points out how the social belief of women tempting men, have influenced on the LTTE recruitment policy. Although LTTE stands for emancipation and liberation, its male- centered recruitment policy reflects the LTTE’s need of becoming the guarding of patriarchal norms and regulations which are constraints to women’s freedom. The LTTE always empathizes the value value of traditional Tamil culture, which had no place for militant women. However, the male-centered recruitment policy had changed opening the LTTE for women as a decision of Prabhakaran, the male- leader of the movement. Prabhakaran had perceived women as a military object, who can more easily travel through out Sri Lankan than Tamil men (Oconnor, 2007). “GOSL forces were accustomed to seeing women travel from village to cities and overseas for work or marriages. Women were assumed to be non-threatening, because of their inherent nature (weak and soft) and social roles (subservient to males). Additionally, even if a woman provoked security interest, she was unlikely to be searched at checkpoints because of cultural sensitivities about men touching women. Women’s ability to evade security and get close to political figures was an asset to the LTTE and essential to its suicide operations” (Oconnor, 2007, p. 47). The sense of understanding is that, as a political institution in the patriarchal society, the LTTE had also observed women as an objective (sex, commercial or military) than human or equal to men. The women have become second sex in the movement and taken as an ‘object’ than human.

The paper argues that, Tamilini and Niromi had understood them as the objectives in the movement more than human. According to their stories, they had followed the commands. Tamilini had believed what she was asked to believe by the LTTE leadership. It was unfair to seek the autonomous, independent political thoughts and behavior in the well- organized, established military movement though, the story of Tamilini showed her regret that not to being an independent political creature in the movement. The regret came through her book is



a symbol of women acceptance them as in a position of second sex or taking the women as objective. Niromi' questioned the decision of the leadership. Her story points out her struggle of keeping political autonomy in certain decisions. However, she even failed to accept her self as individual human.

Taking women as object and locating them as a second sex was a cause to stereotype women as victims than change makers.

4. Conclusion.

This paper is to understand the role of women in the liberation movement. The discussion has made on the examination of two selected narrations of the women in the Liberation movement. The both had seen the cause of joining the movement. The cause was the reaction to the violence produced by the government, military and IPKF. They both believed that the territory of Tamil nation is the only space where Tamil men and women can free from violence. But they both had not seen how the patriarchy can be reproduced in the Tamil land and how patriarchal values can locate women as second sex.

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